Allotment of STD booths at Railway Stations

718. SHRIYADLAPATI VENKAT RAO: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether allotment of STD booths at Railway Stations has been stopped;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the action taken against those responsible for irregularities in allotment of booths?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI O. RAJAGOPAL): (a) and (b) It has been decided to re-examine various issues contained in the policy on allotment of STD/ISD/PCO booths at railway stations which was issued in April 2000. Pending this review and examination, the operation of the policy has been stayed.

(c) Sicne no irregularity in allotment of STD/ISD/PCO booths at stations has been noticed, the question of fixing responsibility does not arise.

Touts at rail booking centres

719. SHRI YADLAPATI VENKAT RAO: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether dominating presence of touts around major railway booking centres have been reported every summer; and

(b) the serious steps taken to tackle the problem of touts cornering seats for X and Y, while Z waits and waits in serpentine queues?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI O. RAJAGOPAL): (a) and (b) No, Sir. However, some activities of touts at major booking centers have come to light during regular checks conducted in reservation offices by Vigilance, Commercial and Police departments. These checks are intensified during peak Summer/Pooja rush period. Besides, strict watch is kept on the working of reservation staff and disciplinary action is taken against the staff found conniving in malpractices in reservation. Campaigns are launched from time to time through various media for educating the general public to desist from purchasing tickets from unauthorized persons.